



# **Attendance Policy**

**June 2022**

## **Rationale**

Ickford School places significant emphasis on attendance and punctuality and expects all parents to embrace this ethos. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and achieve their full potential as learners. Valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late and it causes disruption to the curriculum for other children.

Ickford School expects all parents and guardians to work in close partnership with it in order to achieve high levels of attendance and good punctuality. Parents and guardians must be made aware that failure to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil is a criminal offence.

The school will challenge absence and poor punctuality and will send a letter when any pupil's attendance drops below 97%.

This policy was updated in line with the guidance from the Department for Education, May 2022.

## **THE AIMS OF THE POLICY**

The aims of this policy are:

- to define the responsibility of pupils
- to define the role of parents and guardians
- to define the role of the local authority
- to define the role of class teachers/form tutors in relation to attendance and lateness
- to define the duties of the designated member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality (attendance officer/Headteacher)
- to provide guidelines for dealing with truancy
- to provide guidelines regarding holidays during term time.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Pupils' Responsibility**

Pupils have the following responsibilities in relation to attendance.

- To arrive at school on time and to be in their classroom by 9:00am for morning registration and lined up outside their classroom by 1:15pm for afternoon registration. Children who are not with their class at these times but arrive afterwards will be deemed late.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians have the following role in relation to pupils.

- To ensure that children arrive in school **before** 9:00am, the start of the school day.
- To ensure that the school has a current telephone number and address where they may be contacted throughout the school day in the event of an emergency.
- To sign their child in at reception if they arrive at school after registration or at any other time during the day.
- To sign their child out at reception if authorised to leave the school premises at any time during the school day.
- To notify the school by phone on the first day of absence as early as possible and no later than 9.00am.
- To continue to notify the school by phone on each day of absence before 9.00am
- Parents must not take their children out of school during term time without prior authorisation from the Headteacher.

## **Role of the Local Authority**

The County Attendance Team (CAT) acts on behalf of the local authority and is responsible for the enforcement of attendance for all registered pupils. The CAT has an obligation to do this through legal action if necessary. The school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the local authority and makes use of the CAT when necessary.

The CAT has the following responsibilities:

- To contact parents or guardians of pupils who have high levels of absence or lateness.
- Act on requests made by the school concerning lack of parental contact on first day of absence.
- Provide support, if necessary, from the Ethnic Minorities Pupils Service, for parents or guardians who have English as a second language.
- To issue penalty notices to parents and carers who fail to ensure proper attendance

## **Role of Class Teachers**

Class teachers have the following responsibilities.

- To register pupils promptly and accurately for both morning and afternoon sessions.
- To record as late those pupils who arrive after the official start time but before the register is closed and returned to the school office.
- To record as absent those pupils who are not present when the registers are closed and returned to the school office.
- To ensure that pupils who have been recorded as absent for one or more sessions provide a written or verbal explanation from a parent, guardian or other responsible adult.
- Where a parent or guardian fails to provide a valid reason for an absence or pupils are persistently late the matter must be reported to the Headteacher.

## **Duties of the School Office Staff**

The School Office Staff have the following duties.

- To check all class registers in the morning to note first day absences and telephone all parents who have not contacted the school by 9.30am.
- To keep records of all telephone calls and keep letters concerning absence.
- To keep all attendance records and parent notes for a minimum of three years.
- Where a pupil attends irregularly and there is a possibility of legal action attendance records and related communications may be required as evidence in a court action.
- To monitor regularly absence and lateness to look for patterns and to identify pupils with low rates of attendance and poor punctuality.
- To send regular reminders to parents to ensure they provide any changes in emergency contact numbers.
- To send a letter to bring persistent lateness to the attention of parents and guardians.
- To inform the Headteacher of any persistent lateness or non-attendance.
- To send a letter when absence drops below 97%.

## **The Headteacher has the following duties:**

- To liaise with the CAT and submit written reports on the following issues:
    - i. where a parent or guardian fails to make first day contact on three separate occasions in any one school year
    - ii. all unauthorised absences where a parent or guardian fails to provide a valid reason for the non-attendance of their child
    - iii. where the attendance of a pupil regularly falls below expectation or is persistently late.
  - To ensure that attendance data is included on every pupil's annual progress report.
  - To ensure the school completes and submits the statutory Department for Education (DfE) annual attendance return.
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- To actively discourage parents from taking their children out of school for odd days and holidays.
- To advise the office staff when attendance or lateness letters are needed to be sent.

### **Dealing with Truancy**

The school takes a serious view of truancy from lessons. Not only does truancy cause disruption to a pupil's learning but it may also put the pupil at risk.

The school will deal with truancy in the following way.

- Should a pupil truant from a lesson or series of lessons the class teacher must inform the Headteacher at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Parents or guardians will be informed immediately and if the pupil cannot be located within the hour the police will be informed.
- Where appropriate the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for further action.

### **Absence in Term-Time**

The school rules for absence during term time are as follows.

- The school is obliged to work within the law with regard to term-time holidays.
- In accordance with the DfE guidance the school will actively discourage parents or guardians from planning term-time holidays.
- When a family takes unauthorised absence, the school will refer to the County Attendance Team for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (see below).

- Parents cannot authorise their child's absence from school. The application must be submitted in writing **at least two weeks** in advance of the planned absence.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

The Headteacher will look at applications for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances) during term time on an individual basis.

#### **Circumstances that may be considered *exceptional* include:**

Family sickness or bereavement.

Members of the services or armed forces with specific leave dates.

Where absence from school may be beneficial to a child experiencing significant family trauma.

#### **Exceptional circumstances *do not* include:**

Financial benefit

Family commitments

Weddings

Birthdays and anniversaries

Changes caused by travel companies

Availability of preferred accommodation

Work schedules

Cancellation of previous holidays

Fatigue unless a medical condition accompanied by a Doctor's certificate

Sports events

Family days out

Protest marches

- **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

#### **List of amendments to 2007 Regulations**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

2022